

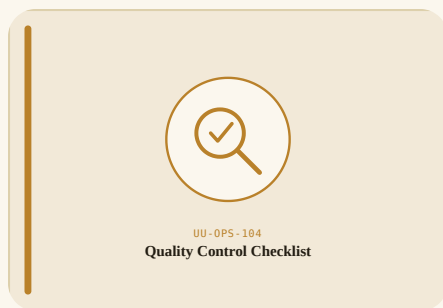
[← Back to Shop Operations](#)

Shop Operations

UU-OPS-104

Quality Control Checklist: Final Inspection Before a Job Ships

A standard final pass that catches the defects customers actually call back about.



1. Why a standard final pass matters

Most upholstery callbacks trace back to a handful of repeat issues — not craftsmanship failures, but things nobody checked before the piece left the shop. A written final-inspection checklist, applied the same way on every job regardless of who built it, catches these before the customer does.

2. Final inspection checklist

- **Fabric pattern and nap direction** consistent across all visible panels and cushions (no mismatched pattern repeat, no nap running opposite directions on adjoining panels).
- **Seams** straight, consistently tensioned, and free of puckering or visible thread pulls; welting (if used) uniform in width along its full run.
- **Staples and tack strips** fully seated and not visible or palpable through the fabric.
- **Zippers and closures** operate smoothly through a full open/close cycle; no fabric caught in the teeth.

- **Cushions** seat correctly in their openings, with consistent fill/loft across a matched set (no one cushion visibly softer or higher than its pair).
- **Frame** stable with no creaks, racking, or movement under normal seated load; all fasteners from any frame repair fully tightened.
- **Suspension** (springs/webbing) returns evenly after a seated-weight test, with no one area bottoming out before the rest.
- **Skirts, tailoring details, and trim** level and even all the way around.
- **Finish hardware** (legs, nailheads, buttons, decorative hardware) fully seated, matched in finish, and free of installation marks on the surrounding fabric.
- **Overall cleanliness** — no adhesive residue, chalk marks, loose threads, or shop debris left on or inside the piece.

3. Who signs off

Final inspection should be a separate step performed by someone other than the upholsterer who built the piece, where shop size allows it — a second set of eyes catches what familiarity with the piece makes easy to miss. Log who inspected and when, even informally; it creates accountability and a record if a defect is disputed later.

Shop practice

Photograph the finished piece from multiple angles before it leaves the shop. It protects the shop in disputes about pre-existing condition, and doubles as a before/after record for marketing once customer permission is confirmed.

4. Before the customer sees it

- Walk a matched set (e.g. a sofa and loveseat, or a dining set) side by side, not just each piece on its own — mismatches are far more visible in a side-by-side comparison than in isolation.
- If the job included a frame or suspension repair, note it on the delivery paperwork so the customer knows what was addressed beyond the visible re-cover.
- Confirm any customer-supplied material was used correctly (right side out, correct panel placement) before the piece is considered complete — this is the hardest category of error to fix after the fact.

Sources

General shop operating framework. Adapt the checklist to the specific construction types and defect patterns your own shop sees most often.

A note on this content: This article is general trade guidance written for Upholsterers United's member network — it isn't legal, safety, or compliance advice, and it isn't a substitute for the current text of any standard, code, or manufacturer specification it references. Standards get revised and local requirements vary; before relying on anything here for an actual compliance or liability decision, verify current requirements with the applicable standards body, code official, or material manufacturer.